

Study Session
Selah City Council
Selah Council Chambers
July 11, 2006

Chris Warwick, Public Works Director for the City of Yakima, addressed the Council. He stated they are bringing straightforward figures, and he understands the City's concern about what service costs. He assured the council that the City of Selah would not have to bear the entire cost burden for service, saying, "That is just not the case." He stated the previous evening the City of Union Gap reaffirmed its interest in having bus service, and it looks like that will run between \$90-100,000 including Dial-a-Ride.

City Supervisor Frank Sweet asked when Selah would need to make its decision and what is the deadline for the ballot.

Mr. Warwick responded that he did not know.

Ken Mehin, Yakima Transit Manager, noted one question he received from the City was the issue of actual Selah ridership. He handed out May 2006 ridership report, showing the number of people getting on and off the bus in Selah. He stated approximately 49% of riders get on or get off in Selah.

Councilman Overby asked if half of the 6321 is the figure representing those picked up or dropped off in Selah. Mr. Mehin responded affirmatively.

Councilman Harris noted last time the big question was total ridership.

Ken Mehin said another question he received was the cost of keeping the existing route. He noted this was a pilot project and that he doesn't know if it could be continued. He stated Selah could have a 40-minute service and coverage would be good. Another possibility would be to have one bus run the entire route for the second half of 2007. He stated that would cost \$145,000 including Saturday and Dial-a-Ride.

Councilman Schmid asked if \$145,000 represents the total cost.

City Attorney Darin Spang asked who is responsible for security on the busses.

Chris Warwick stated he doesn't want to step on any toes on this issue. He stated they do not have a police officer riding the bus at all times, but they do have security to cover transit station.

Council Member Schmid asked if the \$73,000 cost for the second half to the City of Selah excludes the fare box.

Ken Mehin stated the fare box revenue goes down every year relative to the actual cost of providing service.

Public Works Director Warwick noted the fare remains the same, but the costs go up.

Council Member Nichols stated it is her understanding that the contract runs to end of June 2007, so the City would need to pick up second half of 2007.

Councilman Schmid stated during the last year there was discussion about costs going up with Dial-a-Ride.

Mr. Mehin noted the riders have not seen any increase.

Councilman Schmid asked if some of that Dial-a-Ride cost would need to be shared if we're looking at doing something with joint use between Yakima and Selah wouldn't.

Chris Warwick stated Yakima would pay its real cost, and Selah would pay its real cost for Dial-a-Ride.

Councilman Schmid noted we have had People to People, and asked why we would need to have Dial-a-Ride.

Mr. Warwick responded Selah would be required to have paratransit. He stated it would be included whether a city joins or subcontracts. He said he didn't know if People for People would continue to provide that service.

Karen Allen, City of Yakima, stated trips are limited to certain age and disability level. She stated Dial-a-Ride is based upon disability, not age, income, etc. She said People for People also has a set of requirements.

Councilman Keith Larson asked if the \$290,000 would include Dial-a-Ride.

Mr. Warwick responded that to the best of his knowledge it would. He stated paratransit service is broader because of fixed route service.

City Supervisor Frank Sweet asked what it would cost if everything remained the same as it is now.

Council Member Larson said it would be a significant amount more because of Dial-a-Ride.

Frank Sweet stated it is still \$400,000 and some.

Ken Mehin noted it is a different grant.

Gary Pira, City of Yakima, stated based on Ken's paratransit estimate of 19½ hours it comes out to \$370,470 mirroring services we have today. He stated considering key elements such as labor, fuel costs, fringe benefits service has cost \$217,000 through first six months of this year. He noted they asked the Training Center to come in with Yakima Transit as well. He stated they went through CTR, and explored a plan to go to Ellensburg and stop at Training Center. He said neither plan worked and would have cost \$290,000 a year for one bus.

Councilwoman Nichols asked what the ridership is on Saturday.

Mr. Mehin responded it is approximately 1800-1900 compared to 2400-2500 during the week.

Councilwoman Nichols asked what Selah's benefit would be in continuing the service.

Mr. Mehin responded that there are people who don't drive, and the people who do need it depend on it.

Chris Warwick stated the additional benefit is that federal or federally funded facilities require access to public transit.

Councilman Schmidt asked if ridership has increased since the cost of gas has risen.

Ken Mehin responded it has gone up and shows sensitivity to prices.

City Attorney Darin Spang asked who covers insurance.

Ken Mehin responded Yakima transit is covered by state insurance.

Chris Warwick added that the City of Yakima pays into the liability program of the Washington State Transit Insurance Program

Councilman Schmid asked if have we looked at the cost of what it would take to provide the 40-minute service and what it would cost to extend that to the Training Center.

Ken Mehin stated they've determined some preliminary costs. Making the service an hourly service would reduce the City of Selah's cost. He stated six trips a day to Firing Center would be \$62 a day.

Mayor Jones called on CSM Danny Williams, a representative from the Yakima Training Center.

He stated the Training Center is pretty austere so 17-34-year-olds are eager to go off site for entertainment. He stated most of the units at the Center are National Guard. He noted it would likely be a little hard in the beginning, but use would likely pick up. He stated 25% of the total population at the Firing center will be back another year. He noted most of the time officers don't want them out past 2300 hours.

Councilwoman Nichols asked if Selah could be set up as a commuter route.

Mr. Warwick responded that they would have to check with the FTA to see if this would be possible. He noted if you have FTA funds in it, it requires Dial-a-Ride.

Councilman Schmid stated we're looking at something between \$30,000 and 35,000 a year to extend service out to the Training Center.

Councilman Overby questioned the cost benefits of mass transit if it costs this much per person.

Chris Warwick responded that we can't build highways fast enough. He stated the Yakima City Council and citizens decided to provide transportation.

City Supervisor Frank Sweet noted it will cost approximately \$4,500 to put the issue on the ballot.

Mayor Jones thanked Yakima Public Works and Yakima Transit.

City Supervisor Frank Sweet requested a written proposal from Yakima Transit for some of the issues discussed.

Councilman Schmid asked if Yakima Transit is interested in whether the City of Selah becomes part of the Yakima Transit system or whether we contract with Yakima Transit for service.

Chris Warwick said that issue would need to go to a PTBA vote.

The City Supervisor noted this could be different by establishing the routes first could include Training Center and or the remainder of Selah School District.

Mayor Jones declared a five-minute recess.